

# LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL

## Agenda Item Summary

MEETING DATE: **June 22, 2004, Work Session**

AGENDA ITEM NO.: 4

CONSENT:

REGULAR: **X**

CLOSED SESSION:

(Confidential)

ACTION:

INFORMATION: **X**

ITEM TITLE: **Evaluation Report on the Semi-Automated Refuse Collection Program**

RECOMMENDATION: None. Staff will provide a status report on activities regarding the implementation of the new semi-automated refuse collection program.

### SUMMARY:

City Council previously directed staff to proceed with the necessary steps to implement the new semi-automated refuse collection service on October 1, 2003. Attached you will find a brief report describing the implementation and the first six months operations of the program. This report compares performance measures for the first six months of the new system to the same measurement categories for the last six months of the previous system. The comparisons confirm Council's decision to implement the new system was a sound decision. We are pleased to report that the total cost to convert came in \$190,264 or 13% below the initial estimate.

The City began researching alternative refuse collection systems three years ago. This was primarily due to high employee turnover, difficulty in recruiting commercial drivers, high number of employee accidents and extremely high Workers Compensation Insurance. After this issue was first raised, a comprehensive solid waste rate study was completed which also suggested a change in the method of refuse collection.

City Council later asked staff to research various options for consideration as the current refuse collection contract was set to expire on June 30, 2003. Staff proposed to Council to move away from manual refuse collection to a more modern and efficient semi-automated system to accomplish the following: enhance employee recruitment, decrease employee turnover, reduce injuries and injury severity, create a better working environment requiring less manual lifting and improve the aesthetics of the City streets during refuse collection days.

PRIOR ACTION(S): See attachment.

FISCAL IMPACT: Funds from the Undesignated Solid Waste Management Operating Fund Balance were used to acquire replacements trucks and trash carts, retro-fit existing trucks, and implement the public information campaign.

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ATTACHMENT(S): Evaluation Report

REVIEWED BY: lkp

Attachment #1  
Solid Waste Management Changes  
Prior Actions

June 25, 2002 – City Council reviewed solid waste services and payment methods and directed staff to hold citizen meetings and discuss these issues and bring back their feedback and input.

October 29, 2002 – City Council reviewed citizen feedback and input regarding solid waste services and payment methods. Council also discussed the current services and possible changes, as well as funding options.

November 5, 2002 – City Council reviewed Solid Waste Management issues including restricting residential refuse collection to single and multi-family complexes up to four units. City Council approved the change in collection beginning with the implementation of the semi-automated collection system.

December 10, 2002 – City Council approved the following actions:

- The implementation of semi-automated refuse collection October 1, 2003.
- Free decals will be distributed to the disadvantaged, elderly on tax relief and the residents of the Tyreeanna/Pleasant Valley neighborhoods.
- City residents will be allowed to bring to the landfill all bulk and brush without charge; (this would not count as the free monthly trip).
- The initial cost of the uniform trashcans and upgrade/purchase of semi-automated trash trucks will be paid for out of the Undesignated Solid Waste Fund Balance.

January 28, 2003 – City Council approved the following actions:

- The size of the trash carts (32 and 64 gallon) that the City will provide to its residents. The residents will be allowed to select the appropriate size cart for their household.
- The current trash tag / decal system will remain in place and the current \$0.95 tag or \$40 annual decal will be required for use on the 32 gallon cart; either two \$0.95 tags or one \$1.90 tag will be required on the 64 gallon cart or two \$40 annual decals or an \$80 decal will be required. Residents placing bags out for collection will be required to attach a \$0.95 trash tag to the bag.

May 27, 2003 – City Council reviewed the proposed changes to the City Code and received an update from City staff regarding the implementation of semi-automated refuse collection system.

June 10, 2003 – City Council approved the following:

- Amendments to the City Code relating to refuse collection, management and disposal.
- Design of the new trash carts.

June 24, 2003 – City Council held Public Hearing regarding Supplemental Funding requests of \$1,180,000 to cover costs of replacement trucks, retro-fitting of existing refuse trucks with tippers and a Public Information Plan. Had first vote on funding requests (approved 5-2).

July 8, 2003 – City Council approved Supplemental Funding for Solid Waste Management Operating Budget in the amount of \$1,180,000 to implement the semi-automated refuse collection system in a 5 to 2 vote.

August 12, 2003 – Staff provided a status report to City Council on activities implementing the new semi-automated refuse collection system and the public information plan.



# **Semi-Automated Refuse Collection Six Month Evaluation Report**

**City of Lynchburg  
June 22, 2004**



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# SUMMARY

## Semi- Automated Refuse Collection Evaluation Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a preliminary evaluation of the new semi-automated refuse collection system for the first six months of operation from the October 1, 2003 implementation and ending March 30, 2004. This is in response to City Council's request for a short-term status report.

This report compares performance measures for the first six months of the new system to the same measurement categories for the last six months of the previous system. The comparisons confirm Council's decision to implement the new system was a sound decision. We are pleased to report that the total cost to convert came in \$179,564 or 12% below the initial estimate. Further, we believe these performance measures will continue to improve longer-term.

This report is arranged into five sections:

- 1) History / Background
- 2) Performance Trends
- 3) Financial Aspects
- 4) Major Challenges (faced during implementation of system)
- 5) Future Issues

The City began researching alternative refuse collection systems three years ago. This was primarily due to high employee turnover, difficulty in recruiting commercial drivers, high number of employee accidents and extremely high Workers Compensation Insurance. After this issue was first raised, a comprehensive solid waste rate study was completed which also suggested a change in the method of refuse collection.

City Council later asked staff to research various options for consideration as the current refuse collection contract was set to expire on June 30, 2003. Staff proposed to Council to move away from manual refuse collection to a more modern and efficient semi-automated system to accomplish the following: enhance employee recruitment, decrease employee turnover, reduce injuries and injury severity, create a better working environment requiring less manual lifting and improve the aesthetics of the City streets during refuse collection days.

This report addresses these matters and others and staff stands ready to answer any questions to assist City Council in determining the future of the semi-automated refuse collection system.

## **SECTION A: HISTORY / BACKGROUND**

### **A.1: History / Background**

During Fiscal Year (FY) 2002, City Council authorized a comprehensive rate study to analyze short and long-term expenses and revenues for the Solid Waste Management Fund. The firm of Reed, Stowe and Yanke, LLC was selected to perform this rate study. The firm made the recommendation that the City switch to a more modern, efficient and cost-effective refuse collection system similar to what most other cities in the Commonwealth were using.

City Council wanted to ensure City residents had a voice in the decision making process regarding any change to service. Three public meetings were held with approximately 200 residents attending and voicing their concerns and questions. Citizen input was shared by staff with City Council and after considerable deliberations, City Council on November 5, 2002 approved the transition from a manual refuse collection system to a semi-automated refuse collection system beginning October 1, 2003. This change involved the retro-fitting of existing refuse collection equipment and the purchase of several replacements refuse trucks. New trash carts were also purchased for City residents. Each City resident was given the choice of the size of cart (32 or 64 gallon) that they would need to meet their weekly disposal needs. These new trash carts were distributed during August and September of 2003. City Council decided to keep the variable-based fee system adding a new tag and annual decal for the larger 64 gallon cart. This critical decision was designed to continue to have users pay for what they throw away.

The refuse section of the Waste Management Division (WMD) was experiencing a high rate of employee turnover and difficulty in recruiting refuse collection employees. The high turnover was attributed to high injury rates, strenuous physical requirements, unpleasant working conditions and the inability for some employees to obtain commercial driver's licenses. Due to the previous high claims experience, the WMD was required by the City to obtain a separate Workers Compensation Insurance policy in order to protect the City against high-cost injury claims. In a three-year period, the cost of the WMD's Workers Compensation Insurance policy increased nearly 300% (from \$55,000 to \$162,000). The change to a semi-automated refuse collection system was designed to reduce employee turnover, reduce the number and severity of employee injuries and to improve working conditions for the collection work force and to minimize insurance cost.

To implement the new semi-automated refuse collection system, a task force of City staff stakeholders was established. The task force met bi-weekly for approximately one year and worked through issues, problems and concerns. Employees from the following departments or divisions participated on the task force: Billings & Collections, Finance, Citizens First, Communications and Marketing, Human Services, City Manager's Office, Information Technology, Budget and Procurement, Utilities, Public Works Administration, Community Planning & Development, Inspections, Streets and Waste Management.

## **SECTION B: PERFORMANCE TRENDS**

### **B.1: PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

#### **B.1.1: Critical Measures**

The table below addresses critical measures in a six-month comparison between the new semi-automated refuse collection system and the old manual refuse collection system. A brief review of each critical measure follows the chart.

<b>Critical Performance Measure</b>	<b>Units of Measure</b>	<b>Prior to New System (4/1/03-9/30/03)</b>	<b>After New System Started (10/1/03-3/30/04)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Turnover	# of Positions Filled	11	13	2
Sick Days	Number (total)	57	36	(21)
Accidents	Number	3	4	1
Injuries (lost time)	Number (days)	2 (55)	4 (0)	2 (55)
Workers' Compensation Charges	Dollars	\$10,221	\$1,070	\$9,151
Use of Temp. Agencies	Hours	4,092	2,943	(1,149)
Labor \$ Spent on Temp. Agencies	Dollars	\$41,171	\$29,319	(\$11,852)
Maintenance & Repair Cost	Dollars	\$83,869	\$48,090	(\$35,779)
Time to Complete Route	Hours / Minutes	5 hrs. / 45 min.	6 hrs. / 10 min.	25 min.

#### **B.1.1. Critical Measures**

Turnover – During the time period between April 1, 2003 and September 30, 2003 there were four vacancies in the refuse collection work force. Since that time, two additional refuse associates have been hired helping to stabilize the workforce. Hopefully the remaining two positions will be filled during the summer of 2004. Having full-time trained staff on board, enables the City to provide the highest quality of service and reduces the need for temporary agency assistance and the use of overtime.



#### B.1.1. Critical Measures (continued)

Sick Days – The number of sick days used by Refuse Associates decreased from 57 down to 36 (37% decrease). This reduction is believed to be a result of better working conditions and less exposure to germs and viruses. The Refuse Associates still handle a considerable number of trash bags but have less exposure to the bags breaking open and spilling their contents on them.

Accidents and Injuries – The number of accidents and injuries increased slightly; however, the types of injuries are less severe and the lost time from work due to accidents is down from 55 days to 0. This reduces overall personnel cost and the dependency on the use of temporary agencies to supplement the City workforce.

Workers Compensation Costs - These costs include attorney fees, medical expenses, drug and treatment costs. During the first six months of the new system these costs decreased by \$9,151 or 90%.

Use of Temporary Agencies – The use of temporary agencies for assistance has decreased from 4,092 hours to 2,943 hours with the new system. This is a reduction of 1,149 hours or 28%. The dollars savings is also included.

Maintenance & Repair Cost – The refuse collection program uses nine trucks. Four were replaced as part of the switch to the new system. The four trucks were between five and ten years old and were requiring considerable repair efforts resulting in significant downtime and delay in the daily collection of refuse. The remaining five were less than five years old and were retro-fitted to provide the new service. The maintenance and repair cost for the refuse fleet has decreased from \$83,869 to \$48,090 or 43% during the first six-months of the new system.

Time to Complete Routes – The average time has increased slightly. When the new system was first introduced, it was taking approximately 30 to 45 minutes longer to complete each route. After the first six months, the additional time has decreased to 20-25 minutes per route. The Refuse Associates are continuing to “tweak” the new system to improve their performance and time required to complete the job. We anticipate the time to complete the routes will continue to decrease due to familiarity with the equipment and an increase in the use of 64-gallon trash carts.

### B.1.2: Important Measures

The table below provides important measures with a six-month comparison between the new semi-automated system and the old manual refuse collection system. A brief review of each important measure follows the chart.

<b>Important Performance Measure</b>	<b>Units of Measure</b>	<b>Old System (4/1/03-9/30/03)</b>	<b>New System (10/1/03-3/30/04)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Amount of Trash Collected	Tons	6,384	6,038	(346)
Single Family Residents	Using City (households)	18,500 (estimate)	19,232	732
Multi-Family Units (<5) – using City	Number	Unknown	1,518	-
Appearance of Streets	Condition	Average (considerable trash)	Good (less bags and trash on street)	Cleaner Streets
Complaints regarding garbage in street	Number	28	15	(13)
Complaints about service	Number	40	51	11
Number of Calls to Customer Service (regarding trash)	Number	3,136	1,005	(2,131)
Number of Calls Requesting Info (about new service)	Number	553	115	(438)

Chart is continued on next page.

<b>Important Performance Measure</b>	<b>Units of Measure</b>	<b>Old System (4/1/03-9/30/03)</b>	<b>New System (10/1/03-3/30/04)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Trash Carts In Use (32 gal.)	Number	Unknown (estimated 20,000)	14,395	(5605)
Trash Carts in Use (64 gal.)	Number	None	8,834	8,834
Number of Carts Switched (32 to 64 gal.)	Number (households)	N/A	987	N/A
Number of Carts Switched (64 to 32 gal.)	Number (households)	N/A	191	N/A
Number of Businesses Using City Collection	Number	Unknown (estimated 250)	357	107

#### B.1.2. Important Measures

Amount of Trash Collected – The tonnage collected was slightly lower (5.4%) during the first six months of the new system when compared to the previous six months. This is somewhat misleading as residential trash is somewhat seasonal; the amount set out for collection typically increases during the spring and summer months. Comparing (October 1, 2002 – March 30, 2003 to October 1, 2003 - March 30, 2004), reveals an increase from 5,891 tons to 6,038 tons (2.5 %) increase.

Single-Family Residents – Before the implementation of the new system, no one was sure how many single-family residences existed in Lynchburg. After delivering trash carts to each residence and verifying the information with several departments, it is now believed that there are approximately 19,232 single-family residences in the City.

Multi-Family Units (<5 using City trash collection) – The City has been trying to identify those residences which are rental in nature. During the delivery of the trash carts, many residents made it known that their property was rental in nature (at least one room rented out). This information regarding rental properties was made available to Billings and Collections and Inspections for current and future use.

Appearance of Streets – The appearance and aesthetics of City streets have been improved by the use of uniform trash carts. The number of bags being placed on the streets has decreased by 80-90%. The frequency of animals tearing into trash bags and spreading trash has been greatly reduced. The number of calls regarding garbage or trash in the street decreased 46%.

### B.1.2. Important Measures (continued)

Complaints about Service – The number of general refuse calls increased from 40 to 51 after the new system went into place. Most calls related to issues of complaints about neighbors not using the correct tag or decal. A concerted effort has been made by staff to educate and inform City residents of the requirements and changes of the new system

Number of Calls to Customer Service (regarding refuse) – During the spring and summer of 2003, the City's Citizens First Department was receiving large numbers of calls daily regarding the changes totaling 3,136 calls (April 1, 2003-September 30, 2003). During the six months following implementation, the calls have decreased to 1,005 (a 68% decrease). The Billings and Collections Division as well as the Waste Management Division also received a large number of calls during this time but after implementation of the new system those calls significantly decreased.

Number of Calls to Customer Service (regarding new service) – Again this number was up dramatically during the spring and summer but decreased significantly after the new system was implemented.

Trash Carts (in use) – The number of trash carts currently utilized by residents and small businesses totaled 23,229 as of March 30, 2004. The majority of those in use are 32 gallon (62%). An additional 25-50 new carts are being requested for delivery weekly, primarily for residences that were previously vacant or for new construction.

Switched Carts – Over 1,178 trash carts were switched at the request of City residents during the first six months of the new service. The vast majority of residents (84%), who are switching carts, are increasing their size of cart from a 32 gallon to a 64 gallon cart. Each week, on average, an additional 25-50 trash carts are still being "switched out" by City staff.

Number of Small Businesses (using City Collection) – Previously no one was aware of how many small businesses were using City refuse collection services. These small businesses realized they could save money by using the City's cart system versus using one of the private refuse haulers.

### **B.1.3: Other Measures**

Shown in the table below are other measures during the past year with a six-month comparison between the new semi-automated refuse collection system and the old manual refuse collection system. A brief review of each of measure follows the chart.

<b>Other Performance Measure</b>	<b>Units of Measure</b>	<b>Old System (4/1/03-9/30/03)</b>	<b>New System (10/1/03-3/30/04)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Personnel	Full Time Equivalents	15	15	0
Trash Tag / Decal Violations	Number	2,220	1,346	(874)
Miles Traveled	Miles	43,852	45,216	1,364
Citizens Purchasing Annual Decals	Number	5,502 (10-1-2002 thru 9-30-03)	7,779 (10-1-2003 thru 9-30-04)	2,277
Elderly / Disadvantaged / Pleasant Valley (receiving free annual decals)	Number	2,376	2,078	(298)

#### **B1.1.3 Other Measures**

City Personnel – The number of City budgeted personnel has remained constant at 15 FTEs. The number of crews performing the daily refuse collection has not changed. On Mondays and Tuesdays five two-person crews collect the residential refuse. On Thursdays and Fridays, a sixth truck is scheduled to assist the other five crews as the routes on those days are considerably longer with more stops and increased travel distances.

Trash Tag / Decal Violations – Violations issued by Refuse Associates has decreased from 2,220 to 1,346 or 39% with the new system. This is a result of a decrease in number of improper setouts (no tag / decal or wrong size tag / decal). This is believed to be a result of the greater use of the annual decals by residents.

Miles Traveled (to collect) – The mileage that was traveled by the refuse trucks increased slightly by 1,364 (3.1%) primarily due to the new subdivisions and streets being built in the western part of the City.

Citizens Purchasing Annual Decals – With the implementation of the new service, there has been a 41% increase in the number of households using annual decals (7,779 versus 5,502). This is seen a positive for the City because the decal system is more

### B.1.3. Other Measures (continued)

efficient than the tag system and a positive for the citizens because the decal system is less costly.

Elderly / Disadvantaged and Pleasant Valley / Tyreeanna Neighborhood Residents – Three lists are maintained on residents for free annual decals.

1. The number of residents on elderly tax relief has remained flat (909 versus 911).
2. The number of eligible clients on the disadvantaged list continues to decrease with the welfare reform changes made by the State the past several years. The number of eligible recipients receiving free annual trash decals decreased under this program from 1284 to 955 during the past year.
3. The number of Pleasant Valley / Tyreeanna Neighborhood residents and businesses using trash carts has increased from 181 to 214 the past year.

The three different lists were compared to each other to eliminate any duplication of addresses resulting in a decrease of two hundred and ninety-eight (298) free annual decals issued by the City (from 2376 to 2078) from the previous year.

## **SECTION C: FINANCIAL ASPECTS**

### **C.1: Financial Aspects**

City Council on November 5, 2002 approved the transition from a manual refuse collection system to a semi-automated refuse collection system beginning October 1, 2003. This change involved the retro-fitting of existing refuse collection equipment, purchase of several replacement trucks and new trash carts for City residents. Each City resident was given the choice of the size of cart (32 or 64 gallon) that they would need to meet their weekly disposal needs. Listed below was the projected cost for each component as well as the actual cost of implementation. A brief description of each component is provided after the chart

<b>Category</b>	<b>Projected Cost</b>	<b>Actual Cost</b>	<b>Difference</b>
*Replacement Trucks	\$420,000	\$394,763	(\$25,237)
- Salvage value of refuse trucks	-	(\$10,700)	(\$10,700)
*Retro-fitting of Existing Trucks	\$50,000	\$52,106	\$2,106
*Trash Carts (18,500)	\$890,000	\$576,275	(\$313,725)
- Additional Carts (8,000)	-	\$236,600	\$200,363
- Purchased Carts (citizens/ business)	-	(\$34,219)	(\$34,219)
* Public Information Plan	\$50,000	\$41,148	(8,852)
<b>Total Originally Projected</b>	<b>\$1,410,000</b>	<b>\$1,255,973</b>	<b>(\$190,264)</b>
<b>Less Anticipated Cart Savings</b>	<b>(\$230,000)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Appropriation</b>	<b>\$1,180,000</b>	<b>\$1,255,973</b>	<b>\$75,973</b>

Replacement Trucks – Four replacement trucks were purchased for the program with funding for one truck previously included in the refuse collections operating budget for FY 04. The four replacement trucks were acquired at a total cost of \$519,440 with a

projected budget of \$560,000 thereby coming in at \$49,560 less than originally projected. The cost of three of the trucks not included in the regular budget is shown in the above chart (coming in at \$25,237 under projections). The four trucks that were replaced were between six and ten years in age and had been used beyond the normal life of a garbage truck. These four trucks would have been replaced whether the new system was implemented or not. The four old trucks were sold at auction this past spring with the City realizing a salvage value of \$10,700.

Retro-fitting of Existing Trucks – Five existing garbage trucks were retro-fitted with mechanical tippers to allow the mechanical emptying of the new garbage carts. The projected budget for the retro-fitting of these trucks was \$50,000 with the actual cost of \$52,106 being incurred.

Trash Carts – Using water and sewer accounts, it was originally estimated there would be 18,500 residences and small businesses needing trash carts. The original projected cost per cart is as follows: \$50 for the 64 gallon cart and \$46 for the 32 gallon cart. The \$890,000 projection was based on 10,000 carts-64 gallon in size (\$500,000) plus 8,500 carts-32 gallon in size (\$391,000). This was based on recent bids from other Virginia cities. The City of Lynchburg was very fortunate in that it was able to “piggy-back” on an existing contract for similar carts in the Houston-Galveston area. The actual price for the 64 gallon cart was \$34.75 each and the price for the 32 gallon cart was \$27.55 each.

During the research to determine the best possible method to acquire trash carts, staff mailed post cards to 20,300 residential addresses. The cards included information requesting the size trash cart (32 or 64 gallon) desired. Approximately 70% of the post cards were returned indicating individual preferences. During this time, it became apparent to staff that 18,500 carts may not be adequate in number to provide each single-family residence, small business and rental properties with less than five units with trash carts.

With this extremely low price per cart, staff requested less funding for new trash carts totaling \$660,000 for 20,000 trash carts. Staff had thought that it would be better to have additional carts on hand if needed. Little did we know that 20,000 trash carts would not be enough so an additional 2,000 trash were ordered totaling 22,000 trash carts. During August and September, these 22,000 trash carts were delivered with citizens and businesses still needing more. An additional 4,500 trash carts were subsequently ordered with approximately 1,500 of those distributed. Over 1,100 additional trash carts have been purchased by residents and small businesses through March 30, 2004.

There are 700 vacant houses in Lynchburg according to the trash cart database and new houses and subdivisions are being planned and built.

The City has approximately 1,000 carts of each size in current inventory. This inventory should last for the next year without the need for purchasing additional carts. The City is presently delivering 50-75 trash carts each week to residences and small businesses. It was necessary to proceed to obtain these additional trash carts during the implementation of the program. The additional cost of the extra carts has been covered in the current FY 04 refuse collection budget without a request for additional funding.

Public Information Plan – An extensive public information plan was developed by the Communications & Marketing Department to educate and inform the public about the new semi-automated refuse collection system via newspaper, radio, television, billboard, display and the City's web site. This plan included information regarding the new trash carts, the change in tags and decals, Common Goods Fee and ordinance changes. The

projected cost of the plan was \$50,000 with actual expenditures totaling \$41,148. The public information plan has been submitted to the Virginia Municipal League for its VML Achievement Awards – Communications Competition.

## ***SECTION D: MAJOR CHALLENGES***

### **D.1: MAJOR CHALLENGES**

#### **D.1.1: Delivery of Trash Carts**

City staff, as previously mentioned, mailed over 23,300 post cards to residential addresses. The cards included information requesting the size of trash cart desired. Most residents returned the post cards, at which time the City's Information Technology staff created street listings of all City addresses along with the size of cart desired. A default cart size of 32 gallons was designated for all residences not returning a post card. Waste Management staff then developed a systematic plan using current refuse routes to deliver the carts. Each day's cart delivery was based on one refuse route. With this method, residential carts could be delivered in a four week time period. Staff also explored various methods of delivery and decided the use of rental trucks was the most effective method. The next major hurdle was how to provide sufficient manpower to accomplish this feat. Volunteers were sought from other City departments and more than ten departments assisted, providing City employees during their normal work day. Some temporary personnel were used to supplement City staff as necessary. Typically there were three to five crews working each day with an average goal of 1,000 carts to be delivered. The actual delivery of carts began the third week of August with this main phase being completed during the third week of September. Solid Waste staff delivered new carts, in the last week of September, to small businesses and rental properties comprised of less than five units.

Overall the delivery of carts went smoothly due to the extraordinary efforts of staff from the ten City departments.

#### **D.1.2: Switching Out of Carts**

The switching of trash carts and the delivery of carts to new homes and previously vacant homes continues. This is accomplished weekly requiring one day each week by one employee averaging between 50 and 75 carts.

#### **D.1.3: Old Can Usage**

The vast majority of City residents recycled their old trash cans with the City collecting the cans during October of 2003. The City partnered with Recycling Works of Halifax County to recycle the old trash cans collected by the City. The trash cans that were in good shape were re-used in Halifax as part of their curbside recycling program with the City of Lynchburg realizing a small amount of revenue (\$500) from their sale. The cans that were not re-usable were separated into various materials (aluminum, steel, rubber) and recycled to be made into other new products. Some old cans were still being used during the first couple months of the new system but very few are currently in use. Occasionally one will be set out but staff follows up to inform the resident that they no longer can be used.



#### D.1.4: Extra Trash Bags at Set Outs

If residents have extra bags of trash, they are requested to tag and place the bag on top of or beside the cart. The number of trash bags set out weekly is believed to have decreased by 80-90%. There are several hundred residents who decided they would only use trash bags and did not need a City provided cart. Efforts are made to inform residents who consistently use bags along with their cart that it may be necessary to switch to a larger size cart or use an additional cart.

#### D.1.5: Use of Correct Tag or Decal

The City experienced some problems originally with the recipients of the free annual trash decals. Letters had been sent to all eligible recipients of the free annual decals explaining the new system and that they were eligible for a 32 gallon cart and the associated annual decal. Many wanted the larger size cart along with the larger annual decal at no cost to them. After numerous conversations, many upgraded to a larger size cart and paid the \$40 difference for the larger annual trash decal.

#### D.1.6: Emptying of Trash Carts

When the new system first began, there was a tendency by some of the Refuse Associates to pick up the smaller carts and empty them versus using the mechanical lifting mechanism. This had been the practice for many years and was a practice that had to be changed. This issue was discussed with the Refuse Associates and it was agreed that they could remove light weight bags from a 32 gallon cart; however, they are to use the mechanical lifters with full 32 gallon carts and all 64 gallon carts. A second concern that was raised involved setting the trash carts down and placing them close to the spot they were set out by the resident. This point has been stressed to the Refuse Associates and is part of their daily expectations. A third point of concern was the closing of lids especially on rainy or inclement weather days. This also has been discussed with the collection staff and is a daily expectation to close the lids after emptying the cart..

#### D.1.7: Multi-Family Units (> 5 in size)

Staff met with many multi-family owners, operators and managers during the summer of 2003 to explain the new system and how it would work. The names and contacts of private haulers were provided to them for their use. Many still wanted to use the City service but understood the reasoning behind the decision to make them contract out with private haulers. A few exceptions were made due to special or extenuating circumstances and those were allowed to continue to use city refuse collection services. A good example of this would be Holmes Circle. Along Holmes Circle, there are four and six unit buildings in close proximity to each other. Most are owner occupied and expressed their desire to continue receiving City refuse service and not be required to obtain private collection service. The City agreed that the entire complex could continue using City service and provided trash carts to each unit.

#### D.1.8: Townhouses and Condominiums

Staff also met with numerous townhouse and condominium associations to discuss the new system during the summer of 2003. Most of these units are individually owned but connected to other units in a complex (i.e. Georgetown Forrest, Tenbury, etc). In most cases, the complex was provided trash carts and uses the City's refuse collection

service. One problem in the past had been that there was no way to identify violators due to the close proximity of the units. With the new carts, each has a specific identification number and can be matched to a house or townhouse. Most of the homeowners associations also agreed that its members would purchase the annual decals thereby eliminating much of the uncertainty regarding identification of the violators.

## ***SECTION E: FUTURE ISSUES***

### **E.1: FUTURE ISSUES**

#### **E.1.1: Modification of Refuse Routes**

A comprehensive look at existing refuse routes is underway. Residential refuse is collected four days each week with five refuse routes each day (total of 20 routes). The number of potential stops ranges from a low of 980 up to 1300. This causes some day's refuse collection to be considerably longer than other days. Presently, Monday and Tuesday have the shorter routes with Thursday and Friday the longer routes due to the growth in the southern and western part of the City during the past ten years. The refuse routes were last adjusted in the early 1990s.

Staff has completed route counts to verify potential stops. Waste Management staff is working with Community Planning regarding areas of potential growth. Staff is continuing to gather data and to consider various options to better balance and adjust the routes. This will require a considerable number of City residences to change their day of collection. These proposed changes should be finalized during the summer and staff will be prepared to brief Council about the proposed changes. Staff would like to implement the changes beginning October 1, 2004.

Public information will be prepared informing those affected residences of the changes. The public information will include various forms of media including newspaper articles, direct mailers and door hangars describing the change.

#### **E.1.2: One-Year Evaluation**

Staff is planning to provide City Council with a one-year evaluation report of the new semi-automated refuse collection during late 2004. The one-year report should provide a more comprehensive look at the system as well as providing six more months of experience and measurements.